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FINNISH WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

Englund · Fougstedt · Haapalainen
Merikanto · Palmgren · Raitio

Linda Hedlund, Violin
La Tempesta Orchestra · József Hárs



FINNISH WORKS

FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

- Selim Palmgren (1878–1951)**
- 1 **Concert Fantasy, Op. 104 (1944)** **12:32**
- Väinö Haapalainen (1893–1945)**
- 2 **Näky ('Vision') (1920)** **3:55**
- Aarre Merikanto (1893–1958)**
- Violin Concerto No. 4 (1954)** **16:32**
- 3 I. Allegro 4:33
- 4 II. Largo 5:21
- 5 III. Allegro giosamente 6:38
- Väinö Raitio (1891–1945)**
- 6 **Legenda for Violin and Orchestra (1935)** **6:42**
- 7 **Notturmo for Violin and Orchestra (1938)** **8:33**
- Nils-Eric Fougstedt (1910–1961)**
- Concertino per Violino ed Orchestra (1955)** **11:03**
- 8 I. Largamente 4:05
- 9 II. Andante 3:30
- 10 III. Allegro ritmico 3:28
- Marcus Eje [aka Einar Englund] (1916–1999)**
- 11 **Romance**
- from the film *Omena putoaa* ('The Apple Falls') (1952) **2:32**

Finnish Works for Violin and Orchestra

Englund • Fougstedt • Haapalainen • Merikanto • Palmgren • Raitio

This album is a celebration of Finnish violin concertante works that have lived too long in the shadows. Each piece, whether long forgotten or simply underappreciated, carries a distinct voice that deserves to be heard. I was drawn to this repertoire not only for its historical and cultural significance, but also for its incredible emotional depth, colour and inventiveness.

Recording this music felt like stepping into the hidden corners of Finland's musical heritage – from the mystical landscapes of Väinö Raitio's *Legenda*, which in fact was once quite a popular work among violinists, to the raw lyricism of Aarre Merikanto's *Violin Concerto No. 4*. These works reflect a time of transition in Finnish music: tradition meeting modernism, folk roots intertwining with bold experimentation.

One personal favourite is Raitio's *Notturmo* – a dreamlike piece that feels both intimate and unlimited. Another is Selim Palmgren's *Concert Fantasy*, which bursts with brilliance and nuance, revealing new layers with every listen.

Linda Hedlund

This album is not just a recording – it's a revival, a tribute, and an invitation to discover the richness and uniqueness of Finnish music through the voice of the violin.

Selim Palmgren (1878–1951) had a significant international career as both a pianist and a composer. His five piano concertos are considered his most important works. Palmgren composed the *Concert Fantasy, Op. 104* for violin and orchestra in 1944. The premiere took place on 30 November 1945 at a concert by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by the composer himself. The virtuosic solo part was performed by Kai Kajanus.

Väinö Haapalainen (1893–1945) was one of the central figures in the musical life of Viipuri (now Vyborg). As a composer, he produced a wide body of work, primarily in the National Romantic style, and was also active as a teacher and orchestral musician. *Näky* ('Vision') for violin and orchestra was composed in the summer of 1920 in Hanko and premiered on 24 April 1921, in a concert by the Finnish Concert Orchestra of Viipuri, with Charles Henke as the soloist. Since then, the work has been awaiting rediscovery for over a hundred years.

Aarre Merikanto (1893–1958) studied composition in Leipzig under Max Reger from 1912 to 1914 and in Moscow from 1915 to 1916 as a student of Sergey Vasilenko. Early in his career, he deliberately distanced himself stylistically from the folk-influenced compositional style of his famous father, Oskar Merikanto, and became known as one of Finland's earliest modernists. By the mid-1930s, Aarre Merikanto's musical language began to evolve, occasionally drawing influence from folk music rhythms and the mythical atmosphere of the *Kalevala*, while still maintaining a distinctly modern foundation. His *Violin Concerto No. 4* from 1954, which gained recognition in a composition competition, is a brilliant example of his late style. The work premiered in Helsinki on 27 February 1955 in a concert conducted by Tauno Hannikainen. The virtuosic solo part was performed by Anja Ignatius.

Väinö Raitio (1891–1945) was, together with Aarre Merikanto (1893–1958), at the forefront of Finnish modernism in the 1920s. However, in the 1930s, Raitio's musical language became mellower, and gained broader popularity among both orchestras and audiences. In the latter half of the decade, he wrote two colourful works for violin and orchestra, of which *Legenda* (1935) became especially popular. The concertmaster of the Radio Orchestra, Erik Cronvall, performed the piece ten times over a few years, but after this initial success, the work fell into obscurity for more than 80 years.

In 1938, following the success of *Legenda*, Raitio composed another violin work, *Notturmo*. The composition was premiered on 29 March 1939, at a concert by the Dresdner Philharmonie. The concert, which featured Finnish music, was conducted by Toivo Haapanen, with the orchestra's concertmaster Toni Fassbender as the soloist. The German press praised *Notturmo* as 'sonically enchanting', among other things, but it did not achieve the same level of success as *Legenda* and was soon forgotten.

Nils-Erik Fougstedt (1910–1961) served as conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra from 1944 to 1951 and as chief conductor from 1951 to 1960. As a composer, he received solid training, first under Erik Furuholm in Helsinki, and later in Italy, Berlin, Paris, and the United States. His body of work includes elements of dodecaphony, but also traditional Romanticism – particularly in his film music. The *Concertino per Violino ed Orchestra* was composed in 1955 and premiered by Tuomas Haapanen at a concert by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer on 2 August 1955.

Einar Englund (1916–1999) centred his compositional output around his seven symphonies and six concertos for various solo instruments. Before the *Violin Concerto* he composed in 1981, he had already written his *Romance* for violin and orchestra in 1952, which he composed under the pseudonym Marcus Eje for the film *Omena putoaa* ('The Apple Falls').

Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo

Linda Hedlund



Photo: Mari Lehtisalo

Linda Hedlund studied violin at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and Baroque violin performance at the Novia University of Applied Sciences. Performing internationally as a soloist and chamber musician, Hedlund has appeared with, among others, La Tempesta, Les Solistes de Monte Carlo and the Lohja City Orchestra, as well as at many prestigious festivals across Europe, and in Carnegie Hall, New York. Her performances have been broadcast internationally on radio and television. In addition to her career as a performing artist, she is also active as teacher, and has given masterclasses at institutions around the world. In 2006 she founded the annual Emäsalo Music Festival. For her debut recording she collaborated with pianist Oliver Kern in sonatas by Franck, Saint-Saëns and Debussy. A second album, of music by Schubert, Bartók and Piazzolla with guitarist Otto Tolonen, was released in 2011. *Evening Dusk Serenade*, a critically acclaimed album featuring previously unreleased Finnish music for violin and orchestra was released in 2021 on Naxos (8.579095).

www.lindahedlund.com

La Tempesta



Founded in Helsinki in 1997, La Tempesta is a chamber orchestra made up of mainly Finnish orchestral and music education professionals. It served as the festival orchestra of the Oulunsalo Soi Chamber Music Festival from 1998 to 2007, and has since performed at the Kimito Island and Emäsalo Music Festivals, among others. The orchestra has undertaken three tours across Japan, most recently in 2019, which included a performance at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall celebrating 100 years of diplomatic relationships between Finland and Japan, and featured conductor Eero Lehtimäki alongside pianist Izumi Tateno. La Tempesta has been conducted by Tetsuji Honna, Juha Kangas, Pertti Pekkanen, Yuri Nitta, Jyri Nissilä and Robert Lehrbaumer, among others. The orchestra also often appears without a conductor. La Tempesta has given numerous premiere performances of works by composers such as Takashi Yoshimatsu, Pehr Henrik Nordgren, Pablo Escande, Shin-ichiro Ikebe and Koichiro Mitsunaga.

József Hárs



József Hárs enjoys a dual career as both a French horn player and conductor. He has served as the principal French horn player of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra since 2009, and as a conductor has led orchestras and musical ensembles across Finland, including the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also collaborated and toured with various ensembles including Uusinta Ensemble. Of Finnish-Hungarian heritage, Hárs began his musical education in his hometown of Pápa before moving to Freiburg in 1994 to study French horn and pursue work as a professional musician. He then relocated to Frankfurt, where he received his diploma, and after a period of working in Austria as an orchestral musician, moved to Finland, joining the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2006. He studied conducting at the Sibelius Academy from 2011 to 2014 with Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila, and was also mentored by Jorma Panula, Hannu Lintu, Mikko Franck, Sakari Oramo, Susanna Mälkki and John Storgårds. www.jozsefhars.com

This recording explores the emotional depth, colour and inventiveness of Finnish concertante works for violin and orchestra. The pieces range across the transitional landscape of the country's national music during the 20th century, where mysticism, modernism, folklore and experimentation co-exist. Major figures such as Selim Palmgren and Aarre Merikanto are represented, as is charming film music by Einar Englund, writing under a pseudonym. Distinctive works by Väinö Haapalainen, Väinö Raitio and Nils-Eric Fougstedt complete the programme.

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***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Linda Hedlund, Violin
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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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